

Message Text

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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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FOR EB/OCA

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SUBJECT: 1976 EASTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL OFFICERS'
CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 110334; (B) STATE 91419, (C) STATE A-5884 OF
12/10/76

1. THIS REPORT CONTAINS EMBASSY RESPONSES AND COMMENTS
TO EXCELLENT COMPIATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WERE
MADE AT SUBJECT CONFERENCE LAST FALL. EMBASSY REGRETS
DELAY IN SUBMISSION. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS CONTAINING
OUR COMMENTS ARE KEYED TO APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPHS IN REF (C).

2. AMCONGEN LENINGRAD HAS BEEN INCRASINGLY INVOLVED
IN AND SUPPORTIVE OF EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL PROGRAM IN USSR.
FOR EXAMPLE, EMBASSY HAS CALLED UPON AMCONGEN LENINGRAD
TO ARRANGE MEETINS RECENTLY FOR SEVERAL BUSINESS VISITORS
TRANSITING LENINGRAD, TO ASSESS FEASIBILITY OF INCLUDING
LENINGRAD IN ITINERARY OF A SEMINAR/MINI-EXHIBIT SCHEDULE
TO VISIT USSR DURING PAST SIX MONTHS AND TO CONDUCT
SITE SURVEY FOR POSSIBLE USDOC/BEWT APRTICIPATION IN
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MAJOR INTERNATIONAL SPECIALIZED EXHIBIT IN COMING MONTHS.
SEVERAL EXTREMELY USEFUL COMMERCIALLY-ORIENTED REPORTS
HAVE BEEN PREPARED BY THE AMCONGEN STAFF DURING PAST
YEAR AND EMBASSY IS IN FREQUENT COMMUNICATION WITH AMCONGEN
REGARDING THESE AND OTHER REPORTING NEEDS. EFFORTS AT
INCREASING ACCESS OF US BUSINESSMEN TO END-USERS
SPECIALISTS AND INSTITUTES IN LENINGRAD OBLAST HAVE MET

WITH GENERALLY GOOD SUCCESS, ALTHOUGH MORE CAN BE DONE IN THIS AREA. WE INTEND TO STAGE AT LEAST ONE TRADE EVENT IN LENINGRAD DURING COMING YEAR. AS REGARDS UTILIZATION OF KIEV ADVANCE PARTY, WE TRY REGULARLY TO INFORM KAP OF TRAVEL OF US BUSINESSMEN TO KIEV AND ALERT LATTER TO PRESENCE OF KAP. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, THAT NOT AS MANY US BUSINESSMEN IN USSR FOR FIRST TIME VISIT KIEV AS THEY DO LENINGRAD. NOR IS KIEV A NATURAL JUMPING-OFF POINT FOR US TECHNICIANS OR SPECIALISTS ENROUTE FROM MOSCOW TO THEIR FIRMS' PROJECT SITES IN UKRAINE. WE ARE NOW CONTEMPLATING SCHEDULING ONE TRADE PROMOTION EVENT IN KIEV DURING NEXT FISCAL YEAR. KAP STAFF HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL IN REPORTING ON WORKING CONDITIONS FOR US TECHNICIANS EMPLOYED BY AMERICAN COMPANIES IN UKRAINE AND ON COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR US INDUSTRY. AS CONSULATE FACILITIES ARE INSTALLED AND BROUGHT ON STREAM, WE INTEND TO MAKE INCREASING USE OF KIEV FOR TRADE PROMOTION EVENTS AND BUSINESS FACILITATION.

11. WE HAVE GIVEN CLOSE ATTENTION TO SOVIET AND CEMA BANKING AND FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AND HAVE REPORTED THAT ITS CONCERN OVER HARD CURRENCY DEBT AND TRADE IMBALANCE WITH WEST LED TO CUT BACK IN SOVIET PURCHASES IN SECOND HALF OF 1976. TOTAL USSR HARD CURRENCY DEBT IS ESTIMATED IN RANGE OF \$16 BILLION, AN AMOUNT WHICH, WHEN ADDED TO THE ESTIMATED HARD CURRENCY DEBT OF EASTERN EUROPE OF SOME \$27 BILLION (FOR WHICH USSR IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED FINAL GUARANTOR), HAS CAUSED SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNEASINESS IN THE WEST. NEVERTHELESS, DESPITE THIS UNEASINESS, THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE DESIRE OF WESTERN BANKERS TO LEND AND FIRMS TO SELL OFFSETS THIS CONCERN. FOR EXAMPLE, IIB'S RECENT APPROACH TO FINANCIAL MARKET FOR A LOAN WAS MET WITH GREAT INTEREST AMONG WESTERN BANKERS, (PREDOMINANTLY WEST GERMAN, BUT INCLUDING FOUR AMERICAN, TWO BRITISH AND ONE CANADIAN AMONG LEADERS). LEADER ENTHUSIASM RAN SO HIGH THAT SYNDICATED LOAN AMOUNT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY RAISED TO \$500 MILLION TO ACCOMMODATE MORE PARTICIPANTS AT LOW INTEREST. AS THE QUESTION OF AVAILABILITY OF FINANCING BECOMES MORE CRUCIAL TO SOVIETS, THE ADVANTAGE ENJOYED BY THOSE WESTERN FIRMS HAVING ACCESS TO CHEAP CREDITS IS LIKELY TO RISE. HENCE THE STRONG CURRENT SOVIET EFFORT TO FORCE THE FRENCH AND ITALIANS TO COME DOWN FROM 7.75 PERCENT FOR GOVERNMENT LINES OF CREDIT. WHILE THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT WILL NORMALLY FAVOR US BIDDERS, GREATER SOVIET EMPHASIS ON STRETCH OUT OF PAYMENTS, BUY-BACK DEALS, ETC., WILL NOT BE HELPFUL. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES KEY IMPORTANCE OF THIS

TOPIC FOR WASHINGTON END-USERS AND OTHERS AND WILL CONTINUE
TO REPORT DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO SOVIET UNION'S HARD
CURRENCY DEBT AND BORROWING ACTIVITIES IN WEST.

14. WE BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS, WHATEVER THEY MAY
SAY ON OCCASION, UNDERSTAND OUR BASIC RATIONALE IN
IMPOSING EXPORT CONTROLS ON SHIPMENTS OF CERTAIN GOODS
FROM THE UNITED STATES AND, THROUGH COCOM, FROM OTHER MAJOR
WESTERN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, AND HAVE EVEN COME TO
ACCEPT THEM AS A FACT OF COMMERCIAL LIFE. WE THEREFORE,
LIKE USLO PEKING (PEKING 989), FAIL TO SEE ANY UTILITY
IN ARRANGING SPECIAL BRIEFING SESSIONS OR TRIPS TO US
FOR SOVIET OFFICIALS IN ORDER TO GIVE THEM BETTER PICTURE
OF WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH BY THESE CONTROLS--
WHICH THEY RIGHTLY VIEW AS BEING TOTALLY IN OUR INTEREST
AND NOT IN THEIRS. SINCE THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE NEAR-
TERM PROSPECT FOR CHANGE IN THE EXPORT CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
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PROCEDURES WHICH WOULD BENEFIT THE SOVIETS, WE WOULD ONLY
URGE, AS OTHERS HAVE DONE, THAT AGGRAVATION CAUSED BY
THESE CONTROLS FOR SOVIETS AND US BUSINESSMEN ALIKE
BE REDUCED TO SMALLEST PROPORTIONS BY FASTER PROCESSING OF
LICENSE APPLICATIONS LEADING TO QUICKER DECISIONS -- UP
OR DOWN-- IN EACH CASE.

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15. GIVEN COMPLEXITY OF TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH GO INTO DECISION TAKEN IN EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATIONS, EMBASSY IS CHARY ABOUT INSERTING ITS VIEWS TOO FIRMLY INTO DECISION-MAKING PROCESS ON THESE CASES. WE RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT WE MAY BE IN POSITION FROM TIME TO TIME TO PROVIDE SOME AMPLIFYING INFORMATION ON AN "END-USER" WHICH MIGHT RPT MIGHT GIVE AN ADDED DEMENSION TO INFORMATION PROVIDED BY SOVIETS THEMSELVES THROUGH US FIRM APPLICANT. UNFORTUNATELY, WE DO NOT HAVE STAFF TO CONDUCT REGULAR ON-SITE INSPECTIONS --EVEN WERE SOVIETS TO ALLOW US TO DO SO ON A RARE OCCASION--WHILE EQUIPMENT SALES NEGOTIATIONS ARE IN PROCESS AND BEFORE EXPORT LICENSES ARE APPROVED. IN PAST, WE HAVE TRIED TO RESTRICT SUCH REPORTING AS WE HAVE DONE TO INFORMATION ONLY AND HAVE AVOIDED TAKING AN ADVOCATE'S ROLE IN INDIVIDUAL CASES. WE INTEND TO CONTINUE ALONG THESE BASIC LINES IN FUTURE.

16. EMBASSY UNAWARE OF SIGNIFICANT OR SPECIFIC RECENT COMPLAINTS EMANATING FROM US INDUSTRY OR OTHER SECTORS CONCERNING MARKET DISRUPTION CAUSED BY IMPORTS FROM SOVIET UNION. WHEN SUCH COMPLAINTS DO COME TO OUR ATTENTION, HOWEVER, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF STATE OR COMMERCE, WE WILL CERTAINLY TAKE UP INVITATION TO SUBMIT OUR IDEAS ON HOW THEY MIGHT BEST BE HANDLED. IN ABSENCE OF CONCRETE SITUATION, IT IS DIFFICULT TO COME UP WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE IN ALL ITS POSSIBLE MANIFESTATIONS. SHOULD SOVIET EXPORTS TO THE US INCREASE DRAMATICALLY OVER CURRENTL LEVELS, WE WOULD EXPECT TO HEAR SUCH COMPLAINTS AND WILL BE ALERT TO RESPOND WITH OUR SUGGESTIONS AT THAT TIME.

17. EMBASSY WILL INFORM THE APPROPRIATE SOVIET AUTHORITIES OF THIS USEFUL PIECE OF INFORMATION AND REPORT WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN SO NOTIFIED.

19. NOT APPLICABLE. EMBASSY HAS A ACCREDITIED RESIDENT AGRUCULTURAL ATTACHE ASSIGNED TO ITS STAFF.

20. NOT APPLICABLE.

26. ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION COOPERATES WITH PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER AT POST PRINCIPALLY BY PROVIDING WEEKLY INFORMATION ON INFORTANT EVENTS IN ECONOMIC OR COMMERCIAL FIELD FOR INCLUSION IN MATERIALS FOR AMBASSADOR'S PRESS BRIEFING. POSSIBILITIES FOR EFFECTIVE

MEDIA SUPPORT OF COMMERCE-OR US COMMERCIAL OFFICE-
SPONSORED TRADE PROMOTION EVENTS IN USSR ARE SEVERELY
RESTRICTED, THUS, APART FROM INVITING USIA OFFICERS
TO SUCH EVENTS AND INCLUDING THEM WHEREVER POSSIBLE ON
INVITATION LISTS TO OTHER BUSINESS- ORIENTED FUNCTIONS,
THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE IN WAY OF USIA MEDIA OR PROJECT
SUPPORT WHICH WE HAVE FOUND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.
ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION OF EMBASSY WILL REVIEW THEY
NEXT USIA AND CU COUNTRY PLANS WITH VIEW TOWARD MESHING
OUR JOINT ACTIVITIES WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

27. ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION REGULARLY RECEIVES
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WIRELESS FILE ARTICLES AND INFORMATION PREPARED BY USIA'S
EXPORT PROMOTION EDITOR.

29. ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION CONSULTS OCCASIONALLY
WITH PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER REGARDING SUPPORT SERVICES
AVAILABLE FROM USIA IN SUPPORT OF POST'S TRADE PROMOTION
EFFORT. IN STRICTLY CONTROLLED SOCIETY AS SOVIET UNION,
HOWEVER, WHERE THERE IS NO FREE MEDIA,
NO ACCESS TO TV PROGRAMMING, ETC., WE FIND OURSELVES
OPERATING IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENT FROM THAT
APPARENTLY ENVISAGED IN TEXT OF THIS RECOMMENDATION. THUS,
MOST USIA SUPPORT SERVICES WHICH MAY BE VERY SUITABLE
TO EXPORT PROMOTION IN WESTERN MARKET ECONOMIES HAVE
NO UTILITY IN USSR.

32. EMBASSY IS CONSTANTLY STRIVING TO ORIENT
ITS COMMERCIAL REPORTING TOWARD INFORMATION AND EVENTS
WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO INCREASED SALES PROSPECTS FOR
US FIRMS EITHER NOW DOING OR PLANNING TO DO BUSINESS
IN USSR. IN THIS CONNECTION, GIVEN OUR EXTREMELY
LIMITED RESOURCES IN COMPARISON TO VAST POTENTIAL
OF SOVIET "MARKET", WE FOCUS OUR MARKET RESEARCH EFFORTS
ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON INTERVIEWS WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE SOVIET
FOREIGN TRADE OFFICIALS. HAVING MUCH CLEARED UNDER-
STANDING OF FIVE YEAR PLAN THAN WE COULD EVER HOPE TO
GAIN FROM STUDY OF SOVIET PUBLISHED SOURCES (EVEN IF WE
HAD THE TIME) THESE OFFICIALS OFTEN PROVIDE US WITH
SPECIFIC PRODUCT OR EQUIPMENT CATEGORIES IN WHICH THEIR
ORGANIZATIONS HAVE AN INTEREST. WE FIND THAT THIS IS
BEST FORM OF MARKET RESEARCH AVAILABLE TO US.

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33. EMBASSY HAS BEEN ABLE, SINCE ESTABLISHMENT OF
US COMMERCIAL OFFICE OVER THREE YEARS AGO, TO MONITOR
MUCH MORE CLOSELY THAN BEFORE PLANS OF USSR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO
STAGE INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIRS AND EXHIBITS.
SINCE CHAMBER PLANS ITS INTERNATIONAL EXHIBIT SCHEDULES
IN CLOSE COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES OF SOVIET
GOVERNMENT SUCH AS GOSPLAN, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE
AND STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, WE ARE
AWARE THAT THEME SELECTIONS CAN PROVIDE VALUABLE
INSIGHTS INTO SOVIET HARD-CURRENCY PURCHASE PLANS.
WITH NUMBER OF USSR CHAMBER-SPONSORED INTERNATIONAL
SPECIALIZED EXHIBITS GROWING EACH YEAR, THIS TASK
WILL BECOME AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ONE FOR ECONOMIC/
COMMERCIAL SECTION (PRICIPALLY US COMMERCIAL OFFICE)
TO FULFILL.

34. WE ARE INCLUDING WHENEVER POSSIBLE DETAILED
INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF PRINCIPAL COMPETITOR
COUNTRIES IN OUR NORMAL REPORTING, INCLUDING INFORMATION
ON CREDIT POLICY AND MEETINGS OF BILATERAL COMMISSIONS.

35. WE RECOGNIZE VALUE OF REPORTING ON REASONS
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WHY SPECIFIC CONTRACTS ARE NOT WON BY US FIRMS IN
COMPETITION WITH FOREIGN SUPPLIERS, AS WELL AS WHEN THEY WIN OUT
OVER COMPETITION. REAL FACTS, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM
RATIONALIZATIONS WHICH ARE SOMETIMES SUGGESTED BY
SOVIET AUTHORITIES WITH ULTERIOR MOTIVES IN MIND, ARE
HARD TO GET. NEVERTHELESS, SPECIAL EFFORTS WILL BE MADE

TO INCLUDE THIS KIND OF INFORMATION IN FUTURE REPORTING
ON SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING
US COMPANIES.

41. GIVEN DOMINANT POSITION OF USSR IN GALARY OF
COMMUNIST COUNTRIES,WE CONTINUE TO AGREE WITH RECOMMENDATION
THT FSL'S FROM US EMBASSIES IN OTHER CEMA MEMBER
COUNTRIES NOT RPT NOT BE SENT IN TO ASSIST US
IN PROMOTING US PARTICIPATION IN TRADE FAIRS AND
EXHIBITS IN THOSE COUNTRIES. INDEED, GIVEN NATURE OF
SOVIET SOCIETY AND ITS INGRAINED SUSPICIONOF FOREIGNERS--
EVN THOSE FOREIGNERS WITH WHOSE COUNTRIES SOVIET UNION
IS FORMALLY ALLIED--SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD CERTAINLY
BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, ESPECIALLY FOR INDIVIDUAL FSL'S
INVOLVED. EMBASSY RESOURCES ARE FULLY ADEQUATE TO SUPPORT
US TRADE EVENTS BEING HELD IN OTHER CEMA COUNTRIES
WITHOUT SUCH ASSISTANCE AND WE ARE HAPPY TO CONTUNUE SUCH
ACTIVITY.

44. NO APPLICABLE. GIVEN PERMANENT STAFF AT
US COMMERCIAL OFFICE, WHICH OBIATES NEED FOR
ADVANCE MEN OR ADVANCE TEAMS FOR SMALLER SEMINAR/MINI-EXHIBITS
OR TECHNICAL SALES SEMINARS IN SOVIET UNION. AS REGARDS
LARGE USDOC-SPONSORED PARTICIPATION IN SOVIET INTERNATIONAL
AND SPECIALIZED EXHIBITS, WE CONCUR WITH RECOMMENDATION
AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ADVANCE MARKETING CAMPAIGNS
RELATED TO USDOC-SPONSORED EVENTS IN OTHER CEMA COUNTRIES.

46. EMBASSY REGULARLY REPORTS WHAT DETAILS IT CAN
UNCOVER OF SUCCESSFUL CONTRACTS WON BY US FIRMS.
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WHERE TACTICS OR STRATEGY OF SUCCESSFUL US FIRMS
STRIKE US AS BEING NEW OR INNOVATIVE WE TRY DILIGENTLY
TO COMMENT ON THEM FOR BENEFIT OF THOSE IN WASHINGTON
INVOLVED IN ADVISING AND COUNSELING US BUSINESSMEN
ON HOW TO DO BUSINESS IN USSR. MORE OFTEN, HOWEVER,
IT IS UNSUCCESSFUL FIRMS THAT PROVIDE US WITH NEGATIVE
GRIST FOR THE MILL, OR THINGS NOT RPT NOT TO DO IN ORDER
TO AVOID LOSING CONTRACTS TOFOREIGN COMPETITION IN
USSR. THESE WE HAVE ALSO REPORTED AS THEY HAVE COME
TO OUR ATTENTION.

47. NOTING FURTHER TO ADD. WE CONCUR.

50. IN VIEW OF CONSIDERABLE EFFORT NOW BEING MADE
IN WASHINGTON TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN USEFUL DIRECTORIES
OF MAJOR SOVIET GOVERNMENTAL, PARTY AND INDUSTRIAL
(END- USER) ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING RESEARCH AND OTHER
INSTITUTES, WE ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT MEANING OF THIS

RECOMMENDATION. TO DATE WE HAVE TAKEN PAINS IN OUR REPORTING TO INCLUDE WHEREVER POSSIBLE FULL NAMES, TITLES AND ORGANIZATIONS OF ANY SOVIET OFFICIALS OR TECHNICIANS THAT COME TO OUR ATTENTION IN NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS, SO THAT THIS INFORMATION, IF USEFUL, CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO PERIODIC UP-DATES OF DIRECTORIES DONE IN WASHINGTON. EMBASSY'S PUBLICATIONS PROCUREMENT PROGRAM, MOREOVER, REGULARLY SENDS BACK TO WASHINGTON SOVIET PUBLICATIONS CONTAINING INFORMATION ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF SOVIET ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENT, INCLUDING R&D INSTITUTES. OUR BEST SOURCE OF INFORMATION COME FROM CONTACTS WITH INDUSTRIAL MINISTRIES IN ARRANGING USCO PROGRAM OF SEMINAR/MINI-EXHIBITS. GUEST LIST TO THESE EVENTS OBTAINED FROM MINISTRIES ARE REGULARLY FUNNELLED BACK TO DEPARTMENT (INR/OIL/B) FOR CULLING OF NAMES AND ORGANIZATIONS. IN LARGER SENSE, WE ARE NOT WHOLLY CONVINCED THAT DOING MORE AT POST TO COMPILE OUR OWN LISTS OF SOVIET R&D INSTITUTES FOR US BUSINESSMEN WOULD BE OF MUCH PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE TO THEM IN THEIR MARKETING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EFFORTS IN USSR, AT LEAST IN OPENING STAGES, SINCE SO MUCH DEPENDS ON GOING THROUGH CHANNELS. FOR TIME BEING, WE RECOMMEND THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES RETAIN THE FUNCTION OF DEVELOPING DIRECTORIES AND GUIDES ASSISTED BY INPUTS OF RAW MATERIALS FROM EMBASSY. MATLOCK

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